



**Testimony by Nina Livingston, MD In Support of**  
**Proposed Bill No. 258, An Act Concerning Infant Safe Sleep Practices**

Public Health Committee  
February 20, 2015

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter,

I am a child abuse pediatrician and the Medical Director of the Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) program at Connecticut Children's Medical Center. I am also an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics for the University of Connecticut School of Medicine. I am writing to support Proposed Bill Number 258. This bill would require hospitals to provide informational materials regarding recommended safe sleep practices for infants to parents after the birth of a child at the hospital.

In my clinical work evaluating injured children for possible abuse or neglect, I regularly encounter the tragic consequences of unsafe sleep practices. Some of these are infants were placed to sleep face down, but I have also seen infants overlaid by caregivers or suffocated between sofa cushions or between a bed and a wall. Many of these infants did not survive, and some of the survivors suffered devastating brain injuries. Caregivers often tell me that they were unaware of the dangers of their sleeping arrangements.

The Office of the Child Advocate published a sobering report in 2014 examining fatalities of children under three. This report shows that infants in Connecticut are more likely to die from unsafe sleeping conditions than from child abuse, car accidents, choking, drowning, falls, or any other source of accidental injury. In 2013, there were at least 18 infants whose deaths were classified as Natural (due to SIDS) or Undetermined and where risk factors associated with their sleep environment were present. The average age at the time of death was 3 months.

As a pediatrician, I know it is critical that parents receive repeated messages regarding safe sleep environment. Perhaps the best opportunity to provide this information is in the newborn nursery, when parents are available and receptive to education, and when infants are at highest risk. Safe sleep is a critical public health issue, and I support Proposed Bill No. 258 because we must do all we can to reduce preventable infant deaths.

Respectfully submitted,

Nina Livingston, MD  
February 18, 2015